

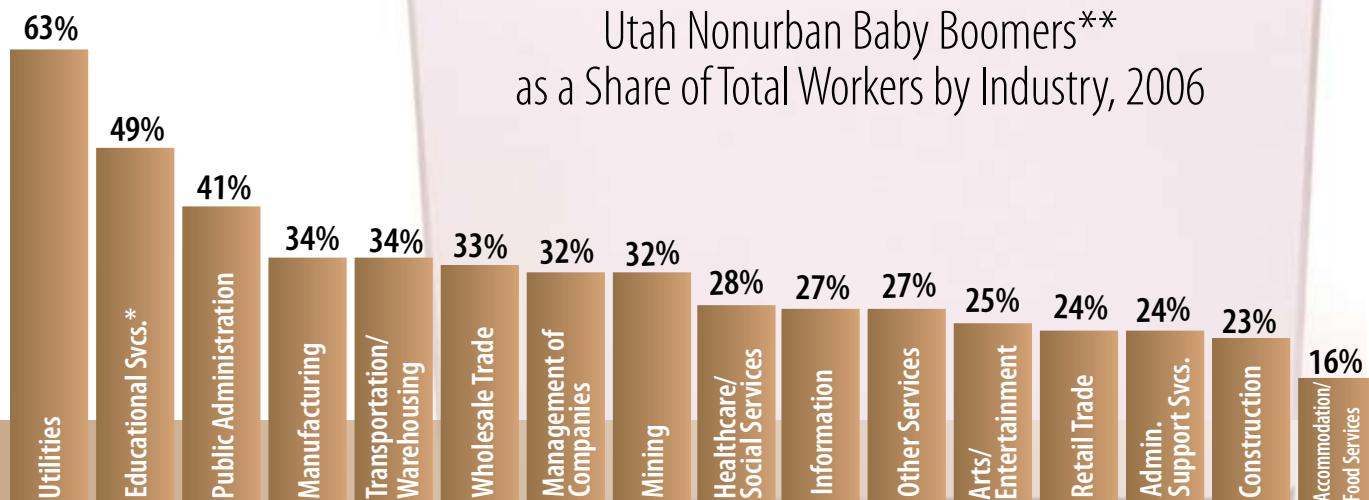
# Who is at Risk?

for Baby Boomer  
Retirements in  
Nonurban Utah?

*A Quick Industry  
Analysis*



Utah Nonurban Baby Boomers\*\*  
as a Share of Total Workers by Industry, 2006



\*Includes private and public employment.

\*\* Includes workers aged 44-64 in Utah counties exclusive of Utah, Salt Lake, Davis, and Weber.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Longitudinal Employer-Households Dynamics.

If you're a guy and you used to have long hair but now you're longing for hair, you just might be a Baby Boomer. If you're a gal and you recently heard your favorite rock song from high school in the elevator, you just might be a Baby Boomer. This age group has dominated the U.S. demographics since their birth following World War II. And just last year, the oldest Baby Boomers turned 60. Yes, it's time to start thinking about retirement all you Boomers!

### *Where are They?*

While the Boomers' retirement may not have a significant effect overall in Utah, certain counties—particularly outside the Wasatch Front—are vulnerable. So, it just may be time for someone besides the Boomers themselves to start planning for their retirement. In nonurban Utah, several industries and counties are particularly vulnerable. These areas with high concentrations of Baby Boomers include Emery, Daggett, Kane, Millard, Piute, and San Juan counties.

### *The Highest Risk*

The utilities industry ranks number one on the vulnerable industry list. A whopping 63 percent of utilities workers off the Wasatch Front are between the ages of 44-64—all of them headed for retirement in the next 20-plus years. Overall, only 30 percent of non-Wasatch Front workers are included in this age group. However, for most nonurban counties, utilities workers are few. Only Millard, Emery, Carbon, and Uintah counties have a significant number of utilities jobs.

### *More Importantly...*

Of greater significance is the age structure of the industry that educates nonurban Utah. Roughly half of all employees working in education (public and private) are between the ages of 44 and 64. In 19 of the 26 counties outside the Wasatch Front, education shows the highest concentration of Baby Boomers. In another five counties, education displays the second highest industrial concentration of Boomers. And in the remaining two areas, education shows the third highest concentration of Boomers. Currently, many school districts already complain of a teacher shortage (although, we economists contend that there are no labor shortages only wage shortages). Without planning, what will happen to our education system in the next 20 years?

Education accounts for a much larger share of total employment than does the utilities industry. In many nonurban counties, the school district is the largest employer. Obviously, the retirement of Baby Boomers from this industry will have a huge economic impact on areas outside the Wasatch Front. The public sector typically responds

more slowly to market changes in wages than the private sector does. Without appropriate planning and funding, the educational shortage seems likely to become increasingly more pronounced.

### *What Baby Boomers?*

Other industries and counties may not even notice the Boomers' departure. The accommodation/food services industry employs only a small portion of Baby Boomers. In addition, construction, retail trade, and the arts/entertainment industries are full of younger workers. Cache, Iron, Summit, Wasatch, and Washington counties all show Baby Boomers below the 30-percent average. Perhaps a college/university and good skiing are the keys to a younger workforce in nonurban Utah. ⓘ

The industry at the highest risk for losing a large number of retiring baby boomers is the utilities industry, followed by the educational services industry in nonurban Utah.